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ABSTRACT

The 2-hour training package is designed to help parents of handicapped children become productive participants at the individualized education program (IEP) conference. The kit contains checklists and other resource materials for appraising the IEP as it is developed. Directions and reproducible materials for workshop participants are included in a guide. A sample invitation to families, suggestions for fact sheets and resource lists, and evaluation forms are also given. A filmstrip introducing basic information about IEPs is part of the package. (SBH)

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PREPARING FOR THE IEP MEETING:

A WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS

BY JEAN NAZZARO

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Finally, sincere thanks are extended to every participant who helped evaluate the material by attending the workshop and providing written comment.

It is hoped that the workshop experience will help prepare people to create individual education programs that are not only appropriate for the students' educational needs but also responsive to the priorities of the student and his or her family.

Jean N. Nazzaro
Education Specialist
The Council for Exceptional Children

Introduction

Ideal Leadership

It would be ideal if this workshop could be jointly planned and led by a parent and a teacher or administrator. Such a shared presentation would demonstrate a commitment to a real planning partnership.

The workshop is designed to be used by local trainers who may offer the program through schools, parent organizations, or advocacy centers.

Leader(s) who are thoroughly familiar with the workshop materials and who know the needs of the students being planned for can make the best use of the workshop activities.

Be Flexible and Expect the Unexpected

When leaders step away from the lecture mode and begin to rely on participant involvement (e.g., small discussion groups, games, simulation activities), a variety of things can happen—many predictable, some not. It is important that the leader not coerce a reluctant participant into a simulation activity or force group discussions in predictable directions. Leaders must permit exploration and discovery.

Believe in the Workshop Content

Regardless of the topic, it is crucial that a workshop leader have a personal commitment and belief in the content of the workshop. Packaged training materials provide guidelines, directions, and suggestions, but they cannot substitute for belief in, and commitment to, a particular idea. For this workshop to succeed, the leader must believe that successful educational planning and implementation depends on a shared commitment of family and school.

We must guarantee that the concerns and priorities of student and family will be considered so that selected goals and services will be appropriate to meet the child's needs.

Participants

The workshop should be scheduled for all parents or guardians of handicapped youngsters—and the children themselves, if appropriate. Teachers and administrators from a school building or program should be invited as resource people. Workshops may be scheduled for 20 to 50 people per session.

Objectives

Participants will

1. Understand the purpose of a written individualized education program (IEP).
2. Know who should attend the IEP meeting and what role each person plays.
3. Know what must be included in each IEP.
4. Understand how an IEP is developed.
5. Be familiar with various placement options.
6. Understand what related services may be provided.
7. Express opinions regarding educational priorities and goals.
8. Know what goes on at an IEP meeting.
9. Review the procedure for contesting a proposed IEP.

Note

Objective 9 is an optional activity. Field testing has indicated that it is an issue parents want to know about. The recommended media for this objective are not included in this workshop but are part of a complete media package titled: *P.L. 94-142, Implementing Procedural Safeguards—A Guide for Schools and Parents*, Stock No. 167.

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1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

Directions to the Workshop Leader

Preparing yourself	Carefully read through the entire Workshop Manual.
Preparing materials for the workshop	Decide on the date for the workshop and prepare a handout with the schedule and agenda. Prepare and send invitations to participants. (The sample invitation on the following page may be duplicated or used as a model.) Have name tags for all participants. Participant materials are in a separate section following the section on Workshop Procedures. Duplicate required materials.
Equipment	Newsprint, Markers, Filmstrip Projector, Screen, Chart Stand, Cassette Player.
Facilities	The first half of the workshop will require auditorium style seating. During the second half participants will work in small groups of 5 to 7 and should be seated around tables or in circles.

Sample Invitation to Families

A special workshop has been scheduled to help you learn how to participate more effectively in the educational planning for your special child.

As you probably know, every youngster who receives special education is required, by law, to have his or her own written individual education program. This document is a means of ensuring that appropriate education and related services will be provided to each handicapped child. Public schools and other agencies that provide education to children with handicaps are required to conduct planning conferences with the youngster's family to discuss what is believed to be an appropriate program. These conferences are often referred to as IEP meetings.

It is important that the values and priorities of parents and the students themselves be reflected in the final version of the IEP. Surveys have shown that many parents feel they lack the knowledge and confidence needed to evaluate the school's recommendations effectively. This workshop is offered to provide you with information about individual education programs, including how you can participate in setting educational goals for your child. You will have a chance to reflect on what you would like to see your son or daughter be able to do in the future. You will be given some experience in stating your own priorities.

A dry run of an IEP meeting will familiarize you with the planning process, so when you go to the actual meeting for your own youngster, you will know what to expect. You will be given materials to take home suggesting ways to prepare yourself for the IEP meeting. A checklist of things to look for in your child's individual education program will also be provided.

When will the workshop be held?

The workshop will be held at _____ on _____, _____,
time day date
at _____
location

Who is invited?

Parents, guardians, or surrogate parents, the student (if it seems appropriate), and an adviser, advocate, or other specialist or counselor who will be attending your child's IEP planning conference with you.

Please return the registration form so we may know who will be attending the workshop.

Registration for Workshop on Preparing for the IEP Meeting

The following people will attend the workshop:

- ☐ Parents: _____, _____
mother father
- ☐ Guardians or
Surrogate Parents: _____
- ☐ Student: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Postworkshop Followup and Evaluation

The final activity of the workshop requires participants to complete a questionnaire that reflects how well prepared each person feels for his or her role at the IEP meeting. Questionnaires should be reviewed and areas of concern should be resolved.

Participants are also given the opportunity to request specific information. School districts may wish to prepare fact sheets and resource lists that could help fill these requests. Suggestions for fact sheet and resource materials are listed below.

A leader's self evaluation form and a suggested post IEP meeting evaluation form also have been included.

Suggestions for Fact Sheets and Resource Lists

Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of

- Administrators and supervisors responsible for various aspects of the special education program.
- Existing special education programs in the schools, perhaps including a visitation schedule.
- Community agencies such as social services, state vocational rehabilitation departments, and advocacy groups.
- Private therapists, counselors, speech/language pathologists, etc.
- Parent groups.
- Where to write to obtain copies of P.L. 94-142; current state special education law and regulations; local district special education application.

Clear statements of

- State or district policy regarding special education.
- Parents' rights and procedures to follow if a decision is to be contested.

Leader's Self Evaluation Form

	YES	NO
1. Did I make the participants feel welcome?	_____	_____
2. Was the atmosphere positive?	_____	_____
3. Was I able to answer questions satisfactorily?	_____	_____
4. Was I enthusiastic?	_____	_____
5. Was I negative?	_____	_____
6. Did all group members participate?	_____	_____
7. Were any participants excluded?	_____	_____
8. Did anyone dominate the group?	_____	_____
9. Did anyone withdraw from the group?	_____	_____
10. During my presentation, did I <i>spea</i> k to the audience or did I <i>read</i> to them?	_____	_____
11. Was I prepared for each presentation?	_____	_____
12. Were there team relationships in the small groups?	_____	_____
13. Did I keep the groups on target?	_____	_____
14. Did I encourage discussion?	_____	_____
15. Was the atmosphere relaxed and comfortable?	_____	_____
16. Was I flexible?	_____	_____
17. Did I capitalize on spontaneous situations?	_____	_____
18. Was my presentation unified; did it hang together?	_____	_____
19. Was I in touch with my audience?	_____	_____

Post IEP Meeting Evaluation Form

- | | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
|---|-------|-------|----------|
| 1. Are you satisfied with the IEP that has been developed? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Do you think the goals selected are important? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Do you think the objectives can be accomplished? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Do you think the placement is appropriate? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Do you feel you had sufficient opportunity to express yourself at the meeting? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Do you feel your opinions were considered in the final IEP? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Do you feel your time at the meeting was well spent? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Do you think a written individual education program is a good idea? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

9. How many training sessions have you attended in preparation for this meeting? _____

10. How many placement conferences have you attended in the past? _____

11. Please check one:

I am a _____ parent

_____ student

_____ teacher

_____ administrator

_____ other (_____)
specify

Workshop Procedures

Step-by-Step Description of Workshop Activities

Procedures

Overview of Workshop		
TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
5 min.	Mini-lecture	Welcome participants. State purposes of workshop. Review format and schedule. Review workshop objectives.
20 min.	Filmstrip presentation Questions and answers	Show IEP filmstrip. Conduct question and answer session.
10 min.	Mini-lecture	Review purposes of assessment and how it leads to program content decisions. Review concept of program determining placement and services. Review impact of least restrictive environment on program and placement.
10 min.	Goal setting	Participants reflect on what they believe are important educational goals.
15 min.	Game	Participants play game to help them experience and respond to aggressive, passive, and assertive statements.
30 min.	Role play	Simulation of IEP conference is set up. Roles of each person attending the meeting are described. Participants examine an IEP. Observer reports on the behavior of participants.
20 min.	Filmstrip (optional)	Filmstrip depicts conflict in placement of EMR child. Due Process Hearing resolves the problem.
5 min.	Review of materials	Review materials used during the workshop. Review "Report from Closer Look" and "Organizing Your Thoughts." Review Recommended Readings.
5 min.	Workshop evaluation	Participants fill out Workshop Evaluation Form and Request for Specific Information Form.

PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
To welcome participants and give a general introduction.	Total group	Chart of Objectives
To understand the purpose of the written IEP. To know what an IEP meeting is. To know who should attend the IEP meeting and what role each person plays. To know what must be included in each IEP. To understand how an IEP is developed. To know how to judge whether a program is working.	Total group	IEP filmstrip and tape cassette Filmstrip projector Screen Cassette player
To understand that program determines placement. To understand the meaning of "least restrictive environment." To understand the purpose of related services.	Total group	Newsprint Placement/Options Time Chart
To define an image of the future.	Small groups	Goal Setting Worksheet
To practice expressing opinions in small group settings. To analyze how it feels when people behave aggressively, passively, and assertively.	Small groups	Game Cards
To experience what goes on at an IEP meeting.	Small groups	Role Descriptions Sample IEP forms
To review the procedure for contesting a proposed IEP.	Total group	Filmstrip and cassette: "How a Procedural Safeguard Hearing Works" Filmstrip projector Screen Cassette player
To provide resources for families to use to prepare for the actual IEP conference.	Total group	"Report From Closer Look: "Know your Rights! . . . A Special Issue" "Organizing Your Thoughts" Recommended Readings
To determine whether the workshop objectives were met.	Individual	Workshop Evaluation Form Request for Specific Information Form

Mini-Lecture

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
5 min.	To welcome participants and give a general introduction.	Total group	Chart of Objectives

Description

Welcome participants to the workshop

The mini-lecture titled "Welcome and Overview" will remind you of the main points to be covered.

Review Objectives

The objectives should be written on newsprint and posted during the workshop. As each new activity is introduced, the accompanying objective could be checked off.

Welcome and Overview

Welcome participants

(Parents, guardians, surrogate parents, advocates, students, regular teachers, principals, and resource people, etc.)

State the purposes of the workshop

- To help you become more knowledgeable about educational programs for students in special education.
- To provide you with specific information about how individualized education programs are developed.
- To provide a dry run at participating in an IEP meeting.
- To give you some practice speaking up for what you believe are important things for your youngster to learn.
- To prepare you for the actual IEP meeting.

Review the format and schedule

- Workshop will run approximately 2 hours.
- First half—lecture and slide presentation.
- Second half—participation in small groups.

Request cooperation in order to keep the workshop to 2 hours

- Keep question and answer sessions from running too long.
- Discussion of specific concerns can be taken up during private conferences.

Objectives

Participants will

1. Understand the purpose of a written individualized education program (IEP).
2. Know who should attend the IEP meeting and what role each person plays.
3. Know what must be included in each IEP.
4. Understand how an IEP is developed.
5. Be familiar with various placement options.
6. Understand what related services may be provided.
7. Express opinions regarding educational priorities and goals for their children.
8. Know what goes on at an IEP meeting.
9. Review the procedure for contesting a proposed IEP (optional).

Notes

Filmstrip and Questions

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
20 min.	To understand the purpose of the written IEP. To know what an IEP meeting is. To know who should attend the IEP meeting and what role each person plays. To know what must be included in each IEP. To understand how an IEP is developed. To know how to judge whether a program is working.	Total group	IEP filmstrip and tape cassette Filmstrip projector Screen Cassette player

Description

Show IEP filmstrip

The narrative is included on pages 19-21. Side 1 of the tape cassette has an inaudible signal for use with a Dukane projector. Side 2 presents an audible signal for manual advance of the filmstrip.

Note: If you expect to have deaf individuals attending the workshop, you may wish to provide them with a copy of the narrative.

Conduct question and answer session

The resource material in this section provides excerpts from P.L. 94-142 and the governing regulations (pp. 22-30). Materials are arranged in question and answer format.

Notes

IEP Filmstrip Narrative

- Frame 1** Public education for children with handicaps has come a long way in a very short time.
- Frame 2** New programs and procedures have come about so fast that people tend to have trouble keeping track of what's happening. It was the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, in 1975 . . .
- Frame 3** that really opened up the alternatives for educating handicapped children by requiring that a continuum of services be available to meet each child's unique learning needs.
- Frame 4** One of the most unique features of this law is the requirement that every youngster who is receiving special education must have an individualized education program, usually referred to as an IEP. An IEP is a means of assuring that appropriate special education and related services will be provided for each handicapped child.
- Frame 5** Appropriate services are those that meet the child's unique needs. The IEP may be thought of as a management tool. . .
- Frame 6** that states what special programs and services are believed to be most appropriate for a given child.
- Frame 7** In the past, placement decisions have generally been made by the school.
- Frame 8** If a parent asked, "What will my child be learning this year?", the answer probably would have been based more on the placement than on the needs of the individual child.
- Frame 9** Today, families have a much more active role in determining the education program. The law really supports the participation of parents, guardians, and, if appropriate, students themselves in the overall development of the IEP.
- Frame 10** Public schools and other agencies that provide education to children with handicaps are required to conduct conferences to develop the program for each handicapped child in order to determine what is most appropriate. These conferences are often referred to as IEP meetings.
- Frame 11** The desired outcome of the conference is a written document that outlines an educational program that both family and school agree would be most appropriate for the individual child.
- Frame 12** The law specifies four individuals who should attend the IEP conference. First, a representative of the school system, qualified to provide or supervise the program that is agreed upon. This is the person who will be responsible for making sure that the necessary resources required to implement the program will be made available.
- Frame 13** Second, a teacher or teachers familiar with the child.
- Frame 14** Third, the parents or guardians who, by sharing their knowledge of the child's needs, help assure that the IEP which is being developed is appropriate and relevant.

-
- Frame 15** Fourth, whenever practical, the student should also attend the planning conference. Including the student in the planning process will give him or her a sense of ownership of the educational program. Participating in the planning makes a person much more likely to want to participate in the work.
- Frame 16** School districts or parents have the right to invite others to the IEP meeting. If it is the first time that the child has been evaluated, there must be someone at the meeting who is knowledgeable about the evaluation procedures and familiar with the results. This person could be one of the people who gathered assessment information, or a teacher.
- Frame 17** But the conference is intended to be small. Having a large group of people at an IEP meeting could defeat the whole purpose of insuring active, open parent and professional interaction and involvement.
- Frame 18** What must be included in each IEP? First, there must be a statement of the present levels of educational performance. Simply stated: What the child can do, right now, in a variety of areas.
- Frame 19** Next, there must be a statement of annual goals, including short term instructional objectives. Annual goals are "best estimates of what the student will be able to do by the end of the year in various curriculum areas."
- Frame 20** Short term instructional objectives are milestone steps between where the child is now and where he or she will be at the end of the year.
- Frame 21** The IEP must include a statement of the specific educational services to be provided, like remedial math and vocational training.
- Frame 22** Transportation, special physical education, specially designed equipment or materials, and counseling are but a few of the possible educational services that may be required in order for the child to benefit from the special education outlined in the IEP.
- Frame 23** A statement describing the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular educational programs is also required.
- Frame 24** The law is very insistent that whenever appropriate handicapped children be educated with children who are not handicapped. One of the goals for a child who requires separate schooling or special class placement because of his unique needs may be to acquire the necessary behaviors that would enable him to move into a less restrictive environment in the future.
- Frame 25** The date that the program will begin and the anticipated length of services are to be specified. It is expected that a handicapped child's IEP will be implemented immediately following the meeting except when the meetings occur during a vacation period or when a short delay is necessary to work out details such as transportation.
- Frame 26** How will you know if a program is working? Before starting to teach anything, it is important to know how learning will be measured and what level of mastery will be required. For this reason, the law also requires that the IEP include objective criteria, schedules, and procedures.

-
- Frame 27** By including descriptions of specific levels of performance, families and school personnel are sure to have the same understanding of exactly what the IEP is aiming to accomplish and there will be no confusion about whether or not the student reached his goals. All children must be evaluated at least annually.
- Frame 28** Developing an IEP that is appropriate for a specific child requires the work and cooperation of many individuals. Information about student's skills, knowledge, and abilities must be gathered, integrated, and sorted out so that the statements about the child's current level of educational performance can be used to build a program on.
- Frame 29** The assessment team, with input from parents and teachers, is best equipped to document what the child can presently do and suggest direction for what the student will be able to do at the end of the year.
- Frame 30** Generally, school personnel have a good feel for the most suitable environment in which to carry out the individualized education program for a given child, but a variety of options are explored with the family before a placement is decided upon.
- Frame 31** Unless the child's program requires some special arrangement, the youngster should be educated in the school he or she would attend if there was no handicapping condition.
- Frame 32** One effective method for developing an IEP is for the assessment team to prepare a summary of the student's resources along with some appropriate program suggestions.
- Frame 33** Most parents agree that the specification of goals, objectives, and instructional methods is best done by professional educators, but care must be taken that families do not feel pressured into signing off on a program they feel has been developed without their input.
- Frame 34** If a draft version of the proposed IEP is presented at the conference, procedures should be established to make sure that families will have every opportunity to suggest additions, deletions, or changes that reflect their own values and priorities.
- Frame 35** The teacher, like the builder, is responsible for working out the construction details. Each little step that must be accomplished before the student can achieve his goal is left up to the teacher to determine in daily lesson planning.
- Frame 36** The details of daily learning are not intended to be written into the IEP, although there will be some suggested milestones to be watching for.
- Frame 37** It is the responsibility of parents, guardians, surrogate parents, and advocates to understand the IEP process so that every child may be assured an appropriate education program.

Resource Materials

Excerpts from The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142)

What does the term Individualized Education Program mean?

P.L. 94-142 Sec. 4 (a) (19)

"(19) The term 'individualized education program' means a written statement for each handicapped child developed in any meeting by a representative of the local educational agency or an intermediate educational unit who shall be qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of handicapped children, the teacher, the parents or guardian of such child, and, whenever appropriate, such child, which statement shall include (A) a statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child, (B) a statement of annual goals, including short term instructional objectives, (C) a statement of the specific educational services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which such child will be able to participate in regular educational programs, (D) the projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of such services, and appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved."

What is one factor that greatly influences placement decisions?

P.L. 94-142 Sec. 612 (5)

"(5) The State has established (A) procedural safeguards as required by section 615, (B) procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."

Regulations

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

§ 121a.550 General.

(a) Each state educational agency shall insure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures which meet the requirements of §§ 121a.550—121a.556.

(b) Each public agency shall insure:

(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." (20 U.S.C. 1412(5) (B); 1414(a) (1) (C) (iv).)

What is included under special education and related services?

Regulations

§ 121a.13 Related services.

(a) As used in this part, the term "related services" means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a handicapped child to benefit from special education, and includes: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, and medi-

Array of related services

cal services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

(b) The terms used in this definition are defined as follows:

(1) "Audiology" includes:

- (i) Identification of children with hearing loss;
- (ii) Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss, including referral for medical or other professional attention for the habilitation of hearing;
- (iii) Provision of habilitative activities, such as language habilitation, auditory training, speech reading (lip-reading), hearing evaluation, and speech conservation;
- (iv) Creation and administration of programs for prevention of hearing loss;
- (v) Counseling and guidance of pupils, parents, and teachers regarding hearing loss; and
- (vi) Determination of the child's need for group and individual amplification, selecting and fitting an appropriate aid, and evaluating the effectiveness of amplification.

(2) "Counseling services" means services provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel.

(3) "Early identification" means the implementation of a formal plan for identifying a disability as early as possible in a child's life.

(4) "Medical services" means services provided by a licensed physician to determine a child's medically related handicapping condition which results in the child's need for special education and related services.

(5) "Occupational therapy" includes:

- (i) Improving, developing or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation;
- (ii) Improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning when functions are impaired or lost; and
- (iii) Preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function.

(6) "Parent counseling and training" means assisting parents in understanding the special needs of their child and providing parents with information about child development.

(7) "Physical therapy" means services provided by a qualified physical therapist.

(8) "Psychological services" include:

- (i) Administering psychological and educational tests, and other assessment procedures;
- (ii) Interpreting assessment results;
- (iii) Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions relating to learning.
- (iv) Consulting with other staff members in planning school programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated by psychological tests, interviews, and behavioral evaluations; and
- (v) Planning and managing a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents.

Array of related services (Cont.)

(9) "Recreation" includes:

- (i) Assessment of leisure function;
- (ii) Therapeutic recreation services;
- (iii) Recreation programs in schools and community agencies; and
- (iv) Leisure education.

(10) "School health services" means services provided by a qualified school nurse or other qualified person.

(11) "Social work services in schools" include:

- (i) Preparing a social or developmental history on a handicapped child;
- (ii) Group and individual counseling with the child and family;
- (iii) Working with those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; and
- (iv) Mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to receive maximum benefit from his or her educational program.

(12) "Speech pathology" includes:

- (i) Identification of children with speech or language disorders;
- (ii) Diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language disorders;
- (iii) Referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language disorders;
- (iv) Provisions of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative disorders; and
- (v) Counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language disorders.

(13) "Transportation" includes:

- (i) Travel to and from school and between schools,
- (ii) Travel in and around school buildings, and
- (iii) Specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a handicapped child.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(17).)

Comment on related services

Comment. With respect to related services, the Senate Report states:

The Committee bill provides a definition of "related services," making clear that all such related services may not be required for each individual child and that such term includes early identification and assessment of handicapping conditions and the provision of services to minimize the effects of such conditions.

(Senate Report No. 94-168, p. 12 (1975).)

The list of related services is not exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective, or supportive services (such as artistic and cultural programs, and art, music, and dance therapy), if they are required to assist a handicapped child to benefit from special education.

There are certain kinds of services which might be provided by persons from varying professional backgrounds and with a variety of operational titles, depending upon requirements in individual States. For example, counseling services might be provided by social workers, psychologists, or guidance counselors; and psychological testing might be done by qualified psychological examiners, psychometrists, or psychologists, depending upon State standards.

Each related service defined under this part may include appropriate administrative and supervisory activities that are necessary for program planning, management, and evaluation.

Definition of special education

Regulations

§ 121a.14 Special education.

(a) (1) As used in this part, the term "special education" means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, including classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions.

(2) The term includes speech pathology, or any other related service, if the service consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, and is considered "special education" rather than a "related service" under State standards.

(3) The term also includes vocational education if it consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child.

(b) The terms in this definition are defined as follows:

(1) "At no cost" means that all specially designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incidental fees which are normally charged to non-handicapped students or their parents as a part of the regular education program.

(2) "Physical education" is defined as follows:

(i) The term means the development of:

(A) Physical and motor fitness;

(B) Fundamental motor skills and patterns; and

(C) Skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports).

(ii) The term includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education, and motor development.

(20 U.S.C. 1401 (16).)

(3) "Vocational education" means organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(16).)

Comment. (1) The definition of "special education" is a particularly important one under these regulations, since a child is not handicapped unless he or she needs special education. (See the definition of "handicapped children" in section 121a.5.) The definition of "related services" (section 121a.13) also depends on this definition, since a related service must be necessary for a child to benefit from special education. Therefore, if a child does not need special education, there can be no "related services," and the child (because not "handicapped") is not covered under the Act.

(2) The above definition of vocational education is taken from the Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended by Pub. L. 94-482. Under that Act, "vocational education" includes industrial arts and consumer and homemaking education programs.

Who must have an IEP and when should it be implemented?

Regulations

§ 121a.341. State educational agency responsibility.

(a) *Public agencies.* The State educational agency shall insure that each public agency develops and implements an individualized education program for each of its handicapped children.

Who must have an IEP and when must it be implemented? (Cont.)

(b) *Private schools and facilities.* The State educational agency shall insure that an individualized education program is developed and implemented for each handicapped child who:

(1) Is placed in or referred to a private school or facility by a public agency; or

(2) Is enrolled in a parochial or other private school and receives special education or related services from a public agency.

(20 U.S.C. 1412 (4), (6); 1413(a) (4).)

Comment. This section applies to all public agencies, including other State agencies (e.g., departments of mental health and welfare), which provide special education to a handicapped child either directly, by contract or through other arrangements. Thus, if a State welfare agency contracts with a private school or facility to provide special education to a handicapped child, that agency would be responsible for insuring that an individualized education program is developed for the child.

Regulations

§ 121a.342 When individualized education programs must be in effect.

(a) On October 1, 1977, and at the beginning of each school year thereafter, each public agency shall have in effect an individualized education program for every handicapped child who is receiving special education from that agency.

(b) An individualized education program must:

(1) Be in effect before special education and related services are provided to a child; and

(2) Be implemented as soon as possible following the meetings under § 121a.343.

(20 U.S.C. 1412 (2)(B), (4), (6); 1414(a) (5); Pub. L. 94-142, Sec. 8(c) (1975).)

Comment. Under paragraph (b)(2), it is expected that a handicapped child's individualized education program (IEP) will be implemented immediately following the meetings under § 121a.343. An exception to this would be (1) when the meetings occur during the summer or a vacation period, or (2) where there are circumstances which require a short delay (e.g., working out transportation arrangements). However, there can be no undue delay in providing special education and related services to the child.

When must IEP meetings be scheduled?

Regulations

§ 121a.343 Meetings.

(a) *General.* Each public agency is responsible for initiating and conducting meetings for the purpose of developing, reviewing, and revising a handicapped child's individualized education program.

(b) *Handicapped children currently served.* If the public agency has determined that a handicapped child will receive special education during school year 1977-1978, a meeting must be held early enough to insure that an individualized education program is developed by October 1, 1977.

(c) *Other handicapped children.* For a handicapped child who is not included under paragraph (b) of this action, a meeting must be held within thirty calendar days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services.

(d) *Review.* Each public agency shall initiate and conduct meetings to periodically review each child's individualized education program and if

appropriate revise its provisions. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year.

(20 U.S.C. 1412 (2) (B), (4), (6); 1414(a) (5).)

Comment. The dates on which agencies must have individualized education programs (IEPs) in effect are specified in § 121a.342 (October 1, 1977, and the beginning of each school year thereafter). However, except for new handicapped children (i.e., those evaluated and determined to need special education after October 1, 1977), the timing of meetings to develop, review, and revise IEPs is left to the discretion of each agency.

In order to have IEPs in effect by the dates in § 121a.342, agencies could hold meetings at the end of the school year or during the summer preceding those dates. In meeting the October 1, 1977 timeline, meetings could be conducted up through the October 1 date. Thereafter, meetings may be held any time throughout the year, as long as IEPs are in effect at the beginning of each school year.

The statute requires agencies to hold a meeting at least once each year in order to review, and if appropriate revise, each child's IEP. The timing of those meetings could be on the anniversary date of the last IEP meeting on the child, but this is left to the discretion of the agency.

Who should participate in the meetings?

Regulations

§ 121a.344 Participants in meetings.

(a) *General.* The public agency shall insure that each meeting includes the following participants:

(1) A representative of the public agency, other than the child's teacher, who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, special education.

(2) The child's teacher.

(3) One or both of the child's parents, subject to § 121a.345.

(4) The child, where appropriate.

(5) Other individuals at the discretion of the parent or agency.

(b) *Evaluation personnel.* For a handicapped child who has been evaluated for the first time, the public agency shall insure:

(1) That a member of the evaluation team participates in the meeting; or

(2) That the representative of the public agency, the child's teacher, or some other person is present at the meeting, who is knowledgeable about the evaluation procedures used with the child and is familiar with the results of the evaluation.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(19); 1412 (2) (B), (4), (6); 1414(a) (5).)

Comment. 1. In deciding which teacher will participate in meetings on a child's individualized education program, the agency may wish to consider the following possibilities:

(a) For a handicapped child who is receiving special education, the "teacher" could be the child's special education teacher. If the child's handicap is a speech impairment, the "teacher" could be the speech-language pathologist.

(b) For a handicapped child who is being considered for placement in special education, the "teacher" could be the child's regular teacher, or a teacher qualified to provide education in the type of program in which the child may be placed, or both.

(c) If the child is not in school or has more than one teacher, the agency may designate which teacher will participate in the meeting.

2. Either the teacher or the agency representative should be qualified

**Who should participate
in the meetings? (Cont.)**

*Comments on IEP conference size
and composition*

in the area of the child's suspected disability.

3. For a child whose primary handicap is a speech impairment, the evaluation personnel participating under paragraph (b) (1) of this section would normally be the speech-language pathologist.

Comment from Regulations Appendix

Generally, having a large group of people at an IEP meeting may be unproductive and very costly, and could essentially defeat the purpose of insuring active, open parent involvement.

While it is necessary to insure that all direct services personnel who work with a handicapped child are informed about and involved in implementing the child's IEP, this does not mean that they should attend the IEP meetings. The mechanism for insuring the involvement of all IEP implementers is left to the discretion of each agency (e.g., the child's teacher, or principal, or supervisor could have that responsibility). However, this is a basic administrative procedure which can be handled outside of the context of the IEP meeting.

The statute does not require all IEP implementers to be involved in the meetings. In fact, the definition of IEP in section 602(19) of the Act includes only four people (e.g., a special education provider or supervisor, the teacher, the parent, and the child, where appropriate). Moreover, it was the intent of Congress that IEP meetings generally be small. This position is reflected in the following statement by Senator Randolph in the June 18, 1975 Congressional Record:

In answer to my colleague, it was the intent, and I believe, I can speak for the sub-committee and the committee in this matter, that these meetings * * * be small meetings; that is, confined to those persons who have, naturally an intense interest in a particular child, i.e., the parent or parents, and in some cases the guardian of the child. Certainly the teacher involved or even more than one teacher would be included. In addition, there should be a representative of the local educational agency who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of handicapped children.

These are the persons that we thought might well be included. That is why we have called them "individualized planning conferences." We believe that they are worthwhile, and we discussed this very much as we drafted the legislation.

While very large IEP meetings might generally be inappropriate, there may be specific instances where additional participants are essential. In order to enable other persons to be included, the Office of Education retained a provision from the proposed rules which authorized the attendance of "other participants, at the discretion of the agency or parents."

Comment: Some commenters recommended that members of the evaluation team participate in IEP meetings.

Response: A new paragraph has been added which states, in effect, that an evaluation person must participate in any IEP meetings conducted for handicapped children who have been evaluated for the first time (i.e., the preplacement evaluation required under section 121a.531 of Subpart E). Since the meeting is intended to develop an education program for the child, it is essential that someone at the meeting be familiar with the child's evaluation.

**What must the public agency offer
in the way of placement options?**

Comment: Several commenters recommended that the representative of the agency be qualified in the disability area in which the IEP is written.

Response: A comment has been added following section 121a.344 which suggests (but does not require) that either the teacher or the agency representative should be qualified in the area of suspected disability. At the time of the meeting, the public agency may not yet have hired a person qualified to provide special education with respect to that suspected disability.

Regulations

§ 121a.551 Continuum of alternative placements.

(a) Each public agency shall insure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of handicapped children for special education and related services.

(b) The continuum required under paragraph (a) of this section must:

(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under § 121a.13 of Subpart A (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions), and

(2) Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

(20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B).)

Regulations

§ 121a.553 Nonacademic settings.

In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods, and the services and activities set forth in § 121a.306 of Subpart C, each public agency shall insure that each handicapped child participates with non-handicapped children in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child.

(20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B).)

Comment. Section 121a.553 is taken from a new requirement in the final regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. With respect to this requirement, the analysis of the Section 504 Regulations includes the following statement: "[A new paragraph] specifies that handicapped children must also be provided nonacademic services in as integrated a setting as possible. This requirement is especially important for children whose educational needs necessitate their being solely with other handicapped children during most of each day. To the maximum extent appropriate, children in residential settings are also to be provided opportunities for participation with other children.

(45 CFR Part 84—Appendix, Paragraph 24.)

Regulations

§ 121a.552 Placements.

Each public agency shall insure that:

(a) Each handicapped child's educational placement:

(1) Is determined at least annually,

(2) Is based on his or her individualized education program, and

(3) Is as close as possible to the child's home;

(b) The various alternative placements included under § 121a.551 are available to the extent necessary to implement the individualized education program for each handicapped child;

**What must the public agency offer
in the way of placement options?
(Cont.)**

(c) Unless a handicapped child's individualized education program requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school which he or she would attend if not handicapped; and

(d) In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs.

(20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B).)

**Placement factors from Section 504
of the Rehabilitation Act**

Comment. Section 121a.552 includes some of the main factors which must be considered in determining the extent to which a handicapped child can be educated with children who are not handicapped. The overriding rule in this section is that placement decisions must be made on an individual basis. The section also requires each agency to have various alternative placements available in order to insure that each handicapped child receives an education which is appropriate to his or her individual needs.

The analysis of the regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (45 CFR Part 84—Appendix, Paragraph 24) includes several points regarding educational placements of handicapped children which are pertinent to this section:

1. With respect to determining proper placements, the analysis states: " * * * it should be stressed that, where a handicapped child is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the handicapped child cannot be met in that environment. Therefore regular placement would not be appropriate to his or her needs * * *."

2. With respect to placing a handicapped child in an alternate setting, the analysis states that among the factors to be considered in placing a child is the need to place the child as close to home as possible. Recipients are required to take this factor into account in making placement decisions. The parent's right to challenge the placement of their child extends not only to placement in special classes or separate schools, but also to placement in a distant school, particularly in a residential program. An equally appropriate education program may exist closer to home; and this issue may be raised by the parent under the due process provisions of this subpart.

Mini-Lecture

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
10 min.	To understand that program determines placement. To understand the meaning of "least restrictive environment." To understand the purpose of related services.	Total group	Newsprint Placement Options/ Time Chart

Description

On newsprint make a simple chart showing:



Cover the points in the mini-lecture on "Program Determines Placement and Services." Allow time for questions; refer to the resource material from the previous activity.

Review Placement Options/
Time Chart

Copy the chart on newsprint or blackboard. Cover the points in the mini-lecture on "Placement Options/Time." (See next page.)

Program Determines Placement and Services

Assessment information serves two purposes.

1. To determine if a child is eligible for special education.
2. To provide information on the youngster's present level of educational performance, to be used as the basis for planning a program.
 - The environment or setting where the program will be carried out can't be determined until after an agreement has been reached on what the child will be learning.
 - The law intends that children who have handicaps receive their education with children who are not handicapped whenever and wherever possible. This is the concept of "least restrictive environment."
 - But nowhere does the law state that all handicapped children should be placed in regular classes.
 - Placement decisions must be determined individually and must be based on what is *appropriate* for a given child.
 - Schools must provide whatever settings are needed to carry out the individualized education program.
 - Options must include any educational opportunity available to non-handicapped youngsters.
 - Some children will need special services in order to benefit from the educational program. If it can be shown that certain services are necessary in order for the child to accomplish his/her goals, the school or agency must see that those services are provided.

- Remember that the educational goals of the child's program are set first; then the needed related services are determined. There are many services a child could use—but only those required to help the child benefit from the special education program specified in his/her IEP should be included.

Placement Options/Time

- The concept of least restrictive environment influences decisions about what a child should be learning.
- If there are certain skills a child could be taught that would enable him/her to move into a less restrictive setting, they should be included in the IEP. For example:

Certain social skills and study skills that would enable a child to move from a special class to a regular class with resource room backup

or

Certain academic skills that would make possible a change in placement from 2 hours a day in regular class to 4 hours a day in regular class.

- The placement/options time chart could serve as a useful tool to help you think about present and future settings and to select appropriate combinations. For example:

Regular class — full time
Itinerant instruction — 2 hours a day/5 days a week
(Itinerant instruction takes place in the regular class.)

A move to a less restrictive environment would be:

Regular class — full time
Itinerant instruction — 1 hour a day/5 days a week

Placement Options/ Time Chart

Placements	Time	
	Present placement	Future placement
Regular class	_____	_____
Special class	_____	_____
Special school	_____	_____
Home instruction	_____	_____
Hospital	_____	_____
Institution	_____	_____
Detention center	_____	_____
Resource room	_____	_____
Itinerant instruction	_____	_____
Consultative assistance	_____	_____
Counseling	_____	_____
Occupational therapy	_____	_____
Physical therapy	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

Goal Setting

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
10 min.	To define an image of the future.	Small groups	Goal Setting Worksheet

Description

Duplicate materials

Duplicate goal setting worksheet (p. 40) for each participant.

Describe the process the group is going to participate in

- Each person brings to the meeting his or her secret hopes and dreams of what the student will be able to do some day.
- The first activity will give each participant a chance to define that image of the future.

Divide the group into small units of 5 to 7 people. Whenever possible, put families with similar interests together. If possible, place resource people and other school personnel in groups with families they will be working with at actual IEP conferences.

Teachers and other school personnel should do this exercise with a particular child in mind, preferably a student belonging to one of the families in the group.

Distribute the goal setting worksheet

Make sure participants understand that goals for the future can be in whatever area they wish. For example:

Social skills: I hope that by the time Bob is through with school he will be able to call people on the telephone if he needs help with something.

Motor skills: I hope that by the end of the year Barbara can get in and out of the wheelchair by herself.

Academic skills: I hope that after high school John will be able to know if his paycheck is correct.

Vocational skills: I hope that when Janet completes her schooling she will be able to do something well enough to get a job.

Recreational skills: I hope that by the end of the year Tommy can pass the swimming test so he can use the pool by himself.

It is not necessary for participants to write goals in all areas right now. They should write two or three goals that occur to them. Let it be spontaneous. This is not the time to weigh which are most important.

Explain how families can do this activity again at home

When they have more time to think. Goals from each member of the family can be written on a master list and brought to the IEP conference.

Each family's list can be compared to the "penciled in" IEP prepared by the assessment team and teachers before making final decisions about what areas to focus on during the coming school year.

Game

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
15 min.	To practice expressing opinions in small group settings. To analyze how it feels when people behave aggressively, passively, and assertively.	Small groups	Game Cards

Description

Duplicate materials

Duplicate a set of game cards (p. 41) for each small group. Cut the cards apart.

Explain the game

Participants will play a game that will give them practice in expressing themselves in small group settings. They also will have an opportunity to analyze how they feel when spoken to in a variety of ways.

- Each card describes a type of response that could be made by a participant at an IEP conference. Cards are dealt so that each participant receives at least one card. Each person has a few minutes to think about what she/he is going to say and how she/he will say it.
- Beginning with the card marked with the star, each person states who she/he is supposed to be (i.e., student, parent, administrator, or teacher) and then expresses the sentiment on the card in tone indicated. Proceed around the circle so that each person has at least one turn.
- After each statement, members of the group react by describing how the statement made them feel.

Notes

Role Play

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
30 min.	To experience what goes on at an IEP meeting.	Small groups	Role Descriptions Sample IEP Forms

Description

Duplicate descriptions

Duplicate a full set of Role Descriptions (pp. 42-45) for each participant. Select or design appropriate sample IEP's (3 samples and a blank form are provided on pp. 46-51) and duplicate for each participant.

Role play a conference

Groups will role play an IEP conference.

- Distribute Role Descriptions. Each participant should be given a copy of all the roles. Participants should play themselves when possible. Review roles with the entire group.
- Extra people should be assigned the role of observer and should move slightly apart from the group. Make sure there are at least one or two observers for each group.
- Distribute completed IEP's. Two samples have been provided. Select the most appropriate sample for your participants or make up your own using the blank IEP form.

To make the simulation experience even more meaningful, you may wish to use an IEP from your own system as a sample for this exercise.

Note. This activity can be done by one group while the rest of the participants observe. The composition of the workshop will determine how you set up the role play. If there are only a few specialists, teachers, and administrators, a single simulation would be best, with all observers receiving a copy of the proposed IEP and the observer form. If this workshop is exclusively for parents, invite at least one administrator and one teacher to be resource people and to participate in the role play activity.

Feedback

Following the IEP conference simulation activity, have observers provide feedback to the group.

If all groups participated in the role play, observers should report back to the small groups.

If one role play was performed for the entire group to observe, members of the audience should be called on to report their observations.

Filmstrip (optional)

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
20 min.	To review the procedure for contesting a proposed IEP.	Total group	Filmstrip and cassette: "How a Procedural Safeguard Hearing Works" Filmstrip projector Screen Cassette player

Description

This is an optional activity to be included if you wish. Materials for this activity must be purchased separately from The Council for Exceptional Children (1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091): P.L. 94-142, Implementing Procedural Safeguards—A Guide for Schools and Parents, Stock No. 167.

Filmstrip Show the filmstrip, "How a Procedural Safeguard Hearing Works."

Questions Allow time for questions. Make sure a resource person is available to answer questions about local policy.

Distribute materials "Report from Closer Look: Know Your Rights! . . . A Special Issue," included with the participant materials (pp. 52-58), reviews parents' rights and due process procedures.

Notes

Review and Evaluation

TIME	PURPOSE	SETTING	MATERIALS
5 min.	To provide resources for families to use to prepare for the actual IEP conference.	Total group	"Report from Closer Look: Know Your Rights! . . . A Special Issue" "Organizing Your Thoughts" Recommended Readings
5 min.	To determine whether the workshop objectives were met.	Individual	Workshop Evaluation Form Request for Specific Information Form

Description

Duplicate materials

Duplicate for each participant the reprint of the "Report from Closer Look" (pp. 52-58), "Organizing Your Thoughts" (p. 59), Recommended Readings (p. 60), Workshop Evaluation Form (p. 61), and Request for Specific Information Form (p. 62).

Review materials

Review the following materials with participants, urging them to take time at home prior to the scheduled IEP conference to think about the questions and issues:

- Goal Setting Worksheet
- Role Descriptions for Parent, Guardian, Surrogate Parent, and Student

Distribute materials

Distribute "Organizing Your Thoughts" and the "Report from Closer Look: Know Your Rights! . . . A Special Issue."

- Review "Organizing Your Thoughts."
- Review "Planning Your Child's Education: You Belong on the Team! Do's and Don't's for Parents" from "Report from Closer Look."
- Review Recommended Readings.

Distribute forms

Distribute the Workshop Evaluation Form and the Request for Specific Information Form.

Thank participants for attending and have them fill out the forms, instructing them to drop them off as they leave.

Participant Materials

(Duplicate according to directions given in Workshop Procedures section.)

Goal Setting Worksheet

The purpose of this exercise is to define an image of the future. Write down your dreams of what you would like your child or your student to accomplish at certain milestones in his/her school career. If you are a student write down your own dreams.

I hope that after high school my child/my student will be able to:

I hope that by the end of this coming year he/she will be able to:

Game Cards

☆ STUDENT Blame the school for not having already taught you the things in the IEP—things you consider baby stuff. (Be aggressive)	STUDENT State a goal that you would find personally satisfying and request that it be included in your IEP. (Be assertive; hold your ground, but don't be hostile)
STUDENT Submit to a placement that you are really unhappy about. (Be passive)	PARENT Demand to have a specific annual goal from <u>your</u> list included in the IEP. (Be aggressive)
PARENT Apologize for having suggested that one of <u>your</u> goals should be considered for the IEP. (Be passive)	PARENT Present one of the annual goals from your list to be included in the IEP. (Be assertive and positive)
ADMINISTRATOR Inform parents that the school does not intend to provide a particular requested service. (Be aggressive)	ADMINISTRATOR Express the belief that the IEP, as written, will provide an appropriate program for the child. (Be positive)
TEACHER Retort to parent: "There is no time to accomplish the family's goals <u>and</u> the ones proposed by the experienced educators." (Be aggressive)	TEACHER Submit to parent's request to redo the IEP completely. (Be submissive)

Role Descriptions

Administrator (Principal)

Your role is to conduct the meeting, making sure that everything is clearly understood, that the family understands the proposed IEP, and that everybody has a chance to express what he or she feels are important educational goals and considerations. You are the moderator and a clarifier of information. Begin by introducing everyone to each other.

Teacher

Your role is to help interpret information about the student's present level of educational performance. You can help answer questions the family may have about information gathered by means of classroom observation and informal diagnosis. You can also help explain proposed annual goals and short term objectives. Families need to know how you will select activities that will help the student reach his or her goals. You can also help explain some of the evaluation procedures and criteria so families will understand how it is determined that a goal has been reached.

Specialist (Counselor or Resource Teacher)

Your role is to explain why specific evaluations were done, what the current level of performance means, and what the implications are for the educational program. It is up to you to explain why certain goals were selected over others and why you believe the program is appropriate.

Role Description

Parent, Guardian, Surrogate Parent

Your role is to make sure you understand what the IEP is proposing and to make sure your family's priorities are considered. Check over the IEP with the following questions in mind. If anything is unclear, don't hesitate to question one of the others attending the conference.

Are there clear statements about what my child can do right now in various areas?

Do these statements of what she/he can do agree with my own observations?

Is what she/he is supposed to accomplish by the end of the year clearly stated?

Do I think these skills are important things for my child to work on?

Do I think the skills represent reasonable expectations?

Does the plan state how one will know if learning is taking place?

Do I understand how learning is going to be measured and how well my child must do on each task?

Have my ideas about what is important been considered in the development of this program?

Do I know where my child will be placed?

Do I feel this is an appropriate placement?

Do I know the specific educational services that will be provided?

Do I know how much time my child will participate in regular education programs?

Does this seem reasonable to me?

Do I know when the program will begin?

Do I know approximately how long the program will last?

Do I know when the next evaluation will take place and what particular skills will be evaluated?

Are there things I can do to help my child succeed in the program?

Have these things been written into the IEP?

If you are satisfied with the proposed IEP, all you have to do is sign it and the program can get started.

If there are portions that you would like to have clarified or rewritten, you can hold off on your signature until the changes have been made to your satisfaction.

If you reject the entire program, you can refuse to sign the IEP and consider beginning a due process procedure.

Remember, an individualized education program is not a contract. It is not binding; it can be changed. However, the school must provide those resources that are written in the program.

Remember, too, that you are an expert on your own child and a resource person to the school.

Role Description

Student

You must try to understand the program that is being planned for you and to speak up if there are things you would like to learn that have not been included. As you look at your IEP, keep the following questions in mind:

Do I agree with what the IEP says I can do right now?

Are the things I'm supposed to learn by the end of the year things I want to learn?

How will I know if I am learning?

How will I know when I have learned what I was supposed to?

Where will I go to school?

Is that all right?

When will the program begin?

How long will it last?

If I learn what it says in the IEP, what kind of a program will I be in next year?

Are the things I want to learn included in this program?

Did I ever tell anybody what I want to learn?

Coming to the IEP conference gives you a chance to help plan your own future.

Role Description

Observer

Your role is to make note of each person's behavior in the group. You are not to interact with the group. Write down objective information, either direct quotes or descriptions of body language. Look for behaviors you believe will facilitate an IEP conference as well as behaviors that will create conflict. You will report your observations at the end of the role play. This feedback should be useful to individuals as they interact at future IEP conferences.

Person

Behavior

Effect on group

Sample IEP Form—1

School district responsible	County #1		Date(s) of meetings:	8/24/78
STUDENT	Rodney Case (name or number)			
Current placement	City Special School		Persons Present	Relationship to Child
Eligibility certified (date)	Aug 16, 1978		Mrs. L. Gause	mother
Period of IEP	Sept 6, 1978 - June 20, 1979		Mrs. M. L. Stevens	teacher
			Mrs. S. King	principal
			Mr. L. Perez	counselor
Curriculum Areas Requiring Special Education and Related Services	Present Level(s) of Performance	Annual Goals	Objectives Attained (dates)	
Area 1 Language development	distorts words with ch, th, + sh sounds uses wrong resonating chamber	corrected in isolation and spontaneous speech		
Area 2 Physical mobility etc.	needs help transferring from wheelchair to toilet or carseat	independent use of toilet		
Special Education and Related Services to be Provided	Personnel Responsible (name and title)	Date Services Begin	Duration	
Curriculum Area #1 Speech therapy	Mrs. Jackson speech therapist	Sept 12, 1978	3 x weekly for 1 year 45 min. each session	
Curriculum Area #2 Physical therapy daily during P.E. Weekly at clinic etc.	A. Kirley - Physical therapist, County Medical Clinic Jim Perez - P.E. teacher	Sept 6, P.E. Sept 9, clinic	30 min. daily P.E. 1 hr. clinic one year	
Transportation via specially equipped bus to and from school and medical center.	C. Jones, director - School Transportation L. Smith - special bus driver	Sept 6, 1978	daily for remainder of school year clinic - weekly one year	

Sample IEP Form—1 (Cont.)

Name or # Rodney Case

A. Describe the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs.

Reading and arithmetic instruction will be delivered in a reg. 4th grade class each day. Rodney will also be scheduled for a library period with the 5th grade class, for a total of 3 hrs. daily in the reg. programs. As Rodney's social skills develop, time in reg. programs will be increased to include music, lunch, and field trips. Remainder of time instruction will be in multi-handi-capped class.

B. List the criteria, evaluating procedures, and schedule for determining whether the short term objectives are met.

Short term objectives	Objective criteria	Evaluation procedures	Schedule
Language: sh, th, ch in initial position	90% correct	Performance Test	review following instruction and monthly thereafter
same in final position	80% correct	"	
all positions in multi-syllable words	75% correct	"	
Pull self up on to parallel bars	body in vertical line starting from sitting - arms on bars at either side	Performance test	weekly assessment
Stand alone	stand 15 sec. back straight	"	
Shift weight on legs	arms on either side balance maintained	"	

Date of parental acceptance rejection 8/24/77

Signature Mrs. L. House

Signature _____

Sample IEP Form-2

School district responsible County 3

Date(s) of meetings: 6/8/78

STUDENT William Emory
(name or number)

Current placement Grade 10, EMR, Central H.S.

Eligibility certified (date) May 30, 1978

Period of IEP Sept 1978 - Feb. 1979

Persons Present	Relationship to Child
Mr. C. Clark	surrogate parent
Mr. Blake	teacher
Ms. Tuttle	principal
Mr. Chinn	counselor

Curriculum Areas Requiring Special Education and Related Services	Present Level(s) of Performance	Annual Goals	Objectives Attained (dates)
Area 1 <i>Math: money management</i>	<i>Understands money concepts up to \$1000 Can deposit checks & cash into checking account.</i>	<i>Learn to understand bills & write checks, keep checkbook balanced</i>	
Area 2 <i>Vocational Training: agriculture etc.</i>	<i>Can drive tractor Can feed & care for livestock</i>	<i>Learn how to use cultivator, disc, etc understand basic nutritional requirements of basic stock</i>	

Special Education and Related Services to be Provided	Personnel Responsible (name and title)	Date Services Begin	Duration
Curriculum Area #1 <i>Remedial business math</i>	<i>Mr. Fletcher Special Ed Teacher</i>	<i>Sept 7, 1978</i>	<i>5 x week 40 min / day 1 semester</i>
Curriculum Area #2 <i>Central High Agricultural Station</i>	<i>Mr. Blake Agriculture Teacher</i>	<i>Sept 7, 1978</i>	<i>3 x week 3 hr. / day 1 semester</i>
etc.			

Sample IEP Form—2 (Cont.)

Name or # William Emory

A. Describe the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs.

English and physical education will be provided in regular education.
The English class is remedial but open to the general student body.
William will go to a regular lunch period and will be
encouraged to participate in all school activities.

B. List the criteria, evaluating procedures, and schedule for determining whether the short term objectives are met.

Short term objectives	Objective criteria	Evaluation procedures	Schedule
To check bills for accuracy To write checks, record checking transactions To balance checkbook	estimate within 25% of accurate total 100% accuracy within \$1.00	performance test with a variety of bill formats performance test simulated performance	review following instruction and weekly thereafter
To attach special equipment to tractor To operate equipment To select proper amount & type of feed for various animals	100% accuracy 90% written test to criteria on performance 85% correct	performance test written and performance test Written test	By 9-30-78 By 2-15-79 By 2-15-79

Date of parental acceptance/rejection _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

School district responsible _____	Date(s) of meetings: _____ _____
STUDENT _____ (name or number)	
Current placement _____	
Eligibility certified (date) _____	
Period of IEP _____	

Curriculum Areas Requiring Special Education and Related Services	Present Level(s) of Performance	Annual Goals	Objectives Attained (dates)
Area 1			
Area 2			
etc.			

Special Education and Related Services to be Provided	Personnel Responsible (name and title)	Date Services Begin	Duration
Curriculum Area #1			
Curriculum Area #2			
etc.			

Sample IEP Form (cont.)

Name or # _____

A. Describe the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs.

B. List the criteria, evaluating procedures, and schedule for determining whether the short term objectives are met.

Short term objectives	Objective criteria	Evaluation procedures	Schedule

Date of parental acceptance/rejection _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Know Your Rights! . . . A Special Issue



REPORT FROM

CLOSER LOOK

**A Project of the Parents' Campaign for
Handicapped Children and Youth**

FALL 1977

You Have New Rights — Use Them!

At the beginning of this school year, some extremely important things happened which have strengthened the rights of handicapped children—and their parents.

- Final federal regulations were issued, spelling out clearly how The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) will actually work. The regulations were published in August and went into effect October 1. They reinforce our national commitment to a free, appropriate education for every handicapped child, including the most severely disabled. And they set up detailed procedures for achieving that goal.
- Earlier in the year, in April, the federal government took action to enforce the rights of all handicapped people by setting down strong regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These regulations assure equal opportunities for the handicapped in every facet of community life; in the area of education, they make clear that no handicapped child may be excluded from publicly supported schooling; that schools (including post-secondary and vocational schools) must be accessible to all; that education must meet individual needs. If a school system persists in denying the rights of the handicapped, it faces the possibility of loss of federal funding. (Section 504 prohibits discrimination against handicapped individuals of all ages by any agency or organization receiving federal funds.)

Both of these government actions have a direct impact on the lives of handicapped people—an impact which is only beginning to be felt. Both laws, strong and far-reaching as originally written, now have the additional force of specific rules for implementation. There are, some advocates point out, certain ways in which these regulations could have been made even stronger in protecting the rights of the handicapped. But as they stand, they provide new and effective means for bringing handicapped people into the mainstream, at last.

No law is a panacea, and no law can automatically relieve parents and handicapped young people of their frustrations with systems that have only recently begun to include them. The important fact to remember is that opportunities are now available to parents that never existed before. In most cases, it's still going to take hard, persistent work—to make sure that handicapped kids get the education they need. But new opportunities are there—and parents must know how to seize them.

The recognition of the role, and the rights, of parents of handicapped children is one of the most significant changes in public policy brought about by Public Law 94-142. There is no longer any legitimate debate about whether parents should participate in planning and monitoring their child's educational program. Every step along the way—from the time a child's special need is first suspected—a parent's right to take action is now protected by law.

We've put this special issue of our newsletter together *not* to describe each specific regulation of P.L. 94-142, but to help parents use these new legal tools—and sharpen their own skills in fighting for equal opportunities for their children.

We receive letters from parents every day about school programs that are inadequate—or worse. The parents of a ten-year-old daughter born with Down's Syndrome write that she was in kindergarten for two years and a "baby-sitting" first grade for the next three

(continued on next page)

You may think we've forgotten you. We haven't. You are still on our mailing list. The fact is that the high cost of printing and distribution has made it necessary for us to combine our issues—and publish only twice each year. So, please be patient. We care about communicating with you, and you'll continue to hear from us . . . just a little less often.

Reprint (Cont.)

New Rights—Use Them! (continued)

because the principal had said "she can't learn anything." A mother writes that she has battled unsuccessfully for thirteen years to get her child, who is diagnosed as having learning disabilities, out of a school "dumping ground." And the father of a teen-aged boy writes in agony about years of failure. He asks urgently for some help in finding vocational education so that his son won't drown in his own defeat.

These parents now have the right to demand that their schools do something *at once* about such situations. Programs *must* be reviewed, must take into account each child's individual needs, and must contain specific, appropriate services. Individualized education programs (referred to as IEPs) must be drawn up for every handicapped child—and must be changed as children change.

By law, these programs must be designed by teams including the child's teacher, a school administrator and—you, the parent. *You belong at that conference table.* Your voice in decisions about what happens to your child in school is essential. Your instinct and knowledge about your child are invaluable—and besides, *you* are the one who has the prime responsibility for your child's welfare, not just today, but in the years to come.

This team approach is a new scenario for most people—both parents and professionals. We're all going to have to learn a great deal more about working together. There are many school professionals who welcome the idea of conferring with parents as equals, and see the benefits that flow from that relationship. There are others who do not welcome the idea at all, and give it lip service at best. Schools have always been *their* turf, and some of them tend to feel defensive about meetings with parents, as if they were under attack. Often, they see parents as over-demanding and pushy, or apathetic and uncooperative, not realizing that parents frequently are reacting to years of being shoved out of school offices. Many parents, on the other hand, feel shaky about contacts with the school, as if they didn't know enough to hold their own. Others may have become so angry and overbearing that they trigger hostile reactions without even realizing it. New habits of thinking and behaving are needed—not only to make meaningful planning possible, but also to open up lines of communication—so that problems can be dealt with as they come up.

This is a changing school scene, requiring more candor and open discussion, more willingness to face up to our own limitations, to recognize our own biases and see the value of pooling our thoughts and energies. What's wrong, for instance, with administrators admitting openly to parents that they must have more

trained teachers and special equipment in order to serve handicapped children adequately—and then going together to the school board or state legislature, to speak up for more funding to create better programs?

It doesn't always work that way. Resistance to change is a reality. There are difficult problems, tragic problems that parents have had to live with for years. And although the law sets up machinery for solving problems through persuasion and understanding, meetings and discussions can break down. To take care of deadlocked situations, a system for settling disputes through impartial hearings is written into the law. This system for protest and appeal is going to require a lot of new learning, too. It can be cumbersome, draining and deeply frustrating.

Unquestionably, parents need help in learning the ropes. Training for parents—not just for teachers—could make things work a lot more smoothly for everyone. Advocacy organizations are taking on this assignment, and courses are springing up in how to get school services under new laws. It's a good idea; in fact, it should be a priority for every parent group. Some parent groups are beginning to set up programs for sensitizing school professionals, administrators and school board members, too, to the kinds of problems that families of handicapped children must cope with. Efforts like these can change old styles, air old grievances and possibly even bury them . . . so that we can get on with a new, fruitful collaboration between parents and professionals.

Parents are in the decision-making act now, where they belong. It may take some practice—but you can do it! In fact, this is really what hundreds of brave and forceful parents have been doing for years, as they've fought to get their kids out of inferior classrooms, insisted that children who were failing get special teaching, gone doggedly to meeting after meeting to convince schools to accept children who were considered "ineducable."

There's a difference now. A big difference. Now parents have the law on their side. If you and your child have been turned away from school, told "we don't take children like that" or given an exhausting run-around when you tried to get necessary services, this is the time to try again. (And please get the help of an experienced parent or other advocate if you possibly can!)

In the pages that follow, we've tried to be as specific as possible about some of the basic do's and don'ts of parent participation. We hope you'll find these useful. Don't forget . . . the rights of parents are there to protect the rights of children. Learn them . . . and use them!

Reprint (Cont.)

DUE PROCESS

IN A NUTSHELL

Throughout this guide, we've indicated times when due process enters the picture. Here's a quick review to keep in mind the main steps involved in due process. Each of these steps reinforces your right to stay on top of decisions about your child.

1. You must receive notice in writing before the school system takes (or recommends) any action that may change your child's school program. Notice in writing is also required if a school refuses to take action to change your child's program.
2. You have the right to give—or withhold—permission for your child to be: tested to determine whether or not he requires special education services (identification); evaluated by specialists to determine what his educational needs are (evaluation); placed in a specific school program to meet his needs (placement).
3. You have the right to see and examine all school records related to the identification, evaluation and placement of your child. If you find that certain records are inaccurate or misleading, you have the right to ask that they be removed from your child's file. Once removed, they may *not* be used in planning for your child's placement.
4. If you do not agree with the school's course of action at any point along the way, you have the right to request an impartial due process hearing. This means that you can initiate a hearing to protest any decision related to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
5. If you fail to win your case, you have the right to appeal the results of the due process hearing to the State Department of Education; and you can appeal to the courts if you lose your case at the state level.

Calling for a due process hearing is your right, but remember that it can be an exhausting process. Before going this route, be sure you have tried to settle differences through every other means—by being as persuasive as possible in meetings with teachers, the principal, special education administrators. If you know that you're up against a brick wall, and you're sure that a due process hearing must be held to resolve conflicting points of view, then you must prepare your case as thoroughly as possible. Be sure to get help from an advocacy group or a lawyer who is familiar with education law and procedures in your state, or an experienced parent. (According to law, the school

system must tell you about sources of free or low-cost legal aid. Ask for this information.)

Know your rights at a hearing:

- The hearing officer must be impartial, may not be employed by the school district or involved in the education of your child.
- You have the right to legal counsel (which includes the advice and support of any advocate, not necessarily a lawyer); to examine witnesses; present evidence; ask questions of school spokespeople; obtain a record of the hearing and all of its findings.

NOTE: Write directly to the superintendent of schools in your district to request a hearing. Hearings must be held not later than 45 days after requested. State Departments of Education must review appeals within 30 days.

HOW CAN CLOSER LOOK HELP YOU WITH ALL OF THIS?

We realize we're giving you lots of advice and that you may need someone to help make things happen. That's what we're here for—to help you locate people in your own area who can give that extra push. So, please write to us, and we'll do our best to boost your efforts. (When you write, it will help to tell us your child's age—and handicapping condition, if he has been diagnosed.) We'll put together as much information as we can to help you out.

If you're looking for an advocate to accompany you to a school meeting on your child's Individualized Education Program (or if you want to talk with other parents who have some know-how), it will help to contact a parent group in your community. We can give you names of organizations whose members are well-informed about federal and state laws, and the steps to follow all the way from testing to due process hearings.

If you want to read more about your child's disability, we can provide lists of books written by parents who have lived through the same trials you're facing. We will also be glad to tell you about other reading you can do about rights.

If you are uncertain about the meaning of psychological and educational testing we can give you a free booklet which can help you understand the purpose and shortcomings of the more well-known tests. (This booklet might also be helpful to your child's teacher.)

In short, we're here to help you within the limits of our resources. Let's hear from you!

Reprint (Cont.)

Planning Your Child's Education: You Belong on the Team!

Do's and Don'ts for Parents

Laws can seem terribly formidable. It's hard to feel that they really apply to one's own son or daughter. When it comes to figuring out what they mean, our tendency is to leave it all to the "experts."

But we can't. Laws belong to us. You don't have to be a lawyer to understand a law—or to use it to change your life and your child's life.

The following *Do's and Don'ts* can help you use specific parts of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act which give parents new rights. Each of those parts relates to the ultimate goal of the law: to provide free and appropriate education services for every handicapped child. Each part interconnects with the others like pieces in a puzzle. These important pieces—*testing and evaluation, individualized education programs (IIEPs) and due process*—need you, the parent, to be sure they fit together . . . and work.

None of these procedures is going to work perfectly. There are bugs in every system, and loopholes. Getting appropriate services is still going to be hard work. We hope these pointers will strengthen your hand. Not every one will apply to you; find what fits your situation, and make use of it. Good luck!

IF YOUR CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS, TELL THE SCHOOL ABOUT IT!

DO . . . Get in touch with your local superintendent of schools without delay if your child has a handicap and is not in school. Your school system is obligated to find all children with disabilities. According to law, no child may be excluded from school because of a handicap. Ask that your child be given an evaluation to find out what kind of program he should have.

The school must take a careful and thorough look at any child who may need special services—by providing a comprehensive evaluation. *Once a child is found eligible for special education, the school must arrange to provide appropriate services; a meeting to prepare an individualized education program must be held within 30 days.*

Don't forget: all this applies not only to young children, but also to high school age youth with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. They are too often a forgotten population!

DO . . . Find out about preschool services for handicapped children. A great many state laws now call for special programs starting at age three, at least for certain specific disabilities. The principal of your local school (or the district superintendent) can tell you more about available programs. P.L. 94-142 provides incentives for education of children with handicaps between ages 3 and 5, and programs are growing.

DO . . . Make every effort to work with your child's classroom teacher if your child is already in school, but is having problems. There may be some discoveries you and the teacher can make together—things that can be done *right now*, during school hours or after, that can help your child. It will take thought, insight, willingness to try out suggested new activities that can add up to a brighter outlook for your youngster. Some preliminary screening may be done, too, to see if more specialized help is needed at the present time. If problems persist, don't let things slide. If you suspect that your child does have a disability *do* go ahead with procedures for getting an evaluation. (Your child's teacher, counselor or principal may carry the ball on this. If not, act on your own.)

DO . . . Remember that you can ask for a re-evaluation even if your child is already placed in a special education program. This is especially important if you feel the placement was based on old, inaccurate or incomplete tests—or if you are dissatisfied with the program. Also, it is important to keep track of a child's needs to make sure that his program continues to be really appropriate, to see if he is ready for a change, or whether his program can be improved.

DO . . . Put your request for an evaluation *in writing*—to the principal of your school or the superintendent. Keep copies of the correspondence. If vital information is discussed on the phone, write a letter confirming the gist of the conversation. Don't trust important matters (like the date, time and place of an evaluation, or what professionals are in charge of testing your child) to memory.

Due Process comes in here. You must receive a written notice from your school system asking your permission to test your child (even if you have requested the evaluation). An explanation of all your rights should be included, including your right to inspect and review all relevant school records about your child.

You must also get a notice in writing if the school turns down your request for evaluation, explaining why. If you can't get an explanation that satisfies you, and you wish to protest this decision, you can request a due process hearing at this point.

DO . . . Keep your own rights file! Use it to document any steps you take to find appropriate education and related services for your child—from the "suspicion of need" stage on up. The file should include: diagnostic test results and other professional reports, your own notations of attempts by you or your child's teacher to solve problems, reports from teachers about your child, copies of letters to and from school officials. Keep copies of state and federal laws and procedures

Reprint (Cont.)

for education of handicapped children and other relevant information. You'll need all this—to keep track of your child's progress, and to stand up for his rights if the school fails to provide an adequate program.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT TESTING AND EVALUATION?

DO . . . Be sure that the evaluation of your child is complete . . . that it does not consist only of a single test aimed at pinning an IQ score or any other label on him . . . but is a well-rounded stock-taking by a team of specialists that tells how your child is doing in all areas of his intellectual, physical and emotional development. This is the only way an appropriate education program can be provided. Information may be gathered in different ways . . . by talking to people who know your child (including doctors or other professionals), by conferring with classroom teachers, by meeting with you, by observing your child and giving him some tests.

DO . . . Make sure your child has a complete physical examination. This is a must. A child who is thought to be retarded may actually have a visual impairment that has never been discovered. Other difficulties may be caused by hidden physical conditions.

DO . . . Remember—calling a child handicapped by this or that condition does not tell us about his potential, how he learns best, what he can do.

DO . . . Talk about your own observations of your child's behavior, strengths and weaknesses to members of the evaluation team—to a guidance counselor, or social worker or school nurse. People who do the evaluating must know how a child acts and reacts with different people, in different settings, at different times . . . in school, on the playground, in his own neighborhood. Your first-hand, round-the-clock knowledge of your child is important information, and should be part of the assessment of your child's needs.

DO . . . Ask what tests will be given to your child, and why. When you sign your name giving permission to have your child tested, make your signature count. Find out what information these tests will yield that can help you and the school know how your child learns, what skills should be strengthened or developed, what problems he has to deal with, what special help he needs. Inform yourself as fully as possible about what these tests are expected to do—before giving your consent to have your child tested. (Tests may be a big mystery area for you, as they are for most people. How about making a study of testing and evaluation through your local parent group or PTA?)

DO . . . Be sure that testing does not discriminate in any way. If a child speaks Spanish, or any language other than English, tests must be given in the language he knows best. Children who have grown up in minority cultures should not be judged by answers to questions

about a world that is totally strange to them. Children who are deaf must have interpreters; all testing must take the nature of handicaps into consideration, so that the picture of a child's ability is a truly fair one.

DO . . . Insist that the results of testing and evaluation be explained to you in clear, jargon-free terms, and that you have copies for your own file.

Due process comes in here. If you do not feel that the school's evaluation is fair or accurate, you are permitted by law to get an independent evaluation from other professionals. But—you may end up paying for it. The school system can ask for a due process hearing when its evaluation is challenged, to decide whether or not an outside evaluation is necessary. If the ruling is in the school's favor, the school does not have to pay. If you do get an independent evaluation (whether or not the school pays for it) it must be considered in decisions about placing your child—and it may be used as evidence in a due process hearing.

Testing will not necessarily mean that your child will be found eligible for special education. If you feel that the school's decision is wrong on this score, you can request a due process hearing at this point.

GET READY FOR MEETINGS TO DECIDE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CHILD

DO . . . Be sure to attend all meetings held to plan or check into your child's individualized education program (IEP). The law states clearly that an IEP team must include one or both parents, the child's teacher and a representative of the school system. (Sometimes, one or more other specialists may be there, too. If this is the first time your child will get special services, someone who was involved in testing your child must be present.) Schools are expected to make every effort to get in touch with parents to make sure that they come to IEP meetings—and to arrange times that they can come.

IEPs must be prepared for every child who is eligible for special education. If no individualized education program has been drawn up for your child, check into it. This programming is the key to getting appropriate services.

DO . . . Prepare as well as you can for the school meeting that will design your child's educational program. Have your child's file ready, with information easily available on all testing and evaluation that has been done—by the school, or privately. Use your right to go through school records to be sure they are accurate and up-to-date. This meeting must be based on a recent and comprehensive evaluation, so check to be absolutely sure this has happened.

DO . . . Bring along a helper to the IEP meeting, if you will feel more comfortable or secure. More and more people are getting special training to act as advocates

(continued on next page)

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Do's and Don'ts (continued)

for parents in these new and unfamiliar circumstances. Your helper can rehearse with you ahead of time, explain what will go on and how decisions about the IEP will be reached. Ask members of your local parent organization if they are aware of this kind of help. If you can't find someone trained as an advocate, try to get assistance from another parent who has been through it. Experience is a great teacher, and you can benefit from it.

DO . . . Be as clear as possible in your own mind about what kind of things you believe your child is ready to learn. Talk these over with professionals you trust, and rely on your own knowledge of your child, too. Make a checklist of key items. Does your son need to learn to sit still and listen, instead of interrupting constantly or making inappropriate comments? Does your daughter need to learn how to speak distinctly? Does she need help with self-care skills? Is your teenager getting pre-vocational or job-skill training?

DO . . . Be able to back up your requests for special kinds of help with diagnostic reports, observations and other information from professionals who know your child. If you wish, you may ask to have professionals accompany you to support your point of view. This is your right according to law.

DO . . . Remember—diagnostic reports, important as they are, are not infallible. They don't say *all* there is to be said about a child. Your most important job is to make sure that the others at the conference never forget that you're talking about a real child—not scores attained on a series of psychological tests. Bring up all the real-life information you feel is relevant to a discussion about your son or daughter's educational needs. In the past, there was far too much tendency to rely on reports and records, not to look at the child himself. This is your chance to push for this change in perspective.

DO . . . Be wary of any suggestion to place your child (or leave him) in a classroom that has a label. The old approach was to give children "trainable retarded education" or "blind education" or "physically handicapped education" which more often than not meant inferior education, or none at all. That's what the new law is supposed to stop. The program your child gets should be built on services that relate to strengths and abilities, special problems and learning needs . . . not to his category of disability. If you don't agree that this is what the program does, speak up for your point of view—and make sure that changes are made.

DO . . . Try to understand the issue of "mainstreaming" as fully as possible. The law is based on the right of handicapped children to be part of the world, to learn, work and play alongside their non-handicapped schoolmates. The law's words for it are: educating children in the "least restrictive environment." Somebody coined the word "mainstreaming" to describe this view and the term stuck. Whatever words you use,

it makes a big difference in the image that children have of themselves, their confidence and their ability to get along as accepted members of society. This doesn't mean that *every* handicapped child belongs in a regular class. But he *should* be given that chance, if, with sufficient aid and understanding, he can hold his own. And if a child spends all day in a separate class because his need for small classes is so great, he should be given every possible opportunity to join his peers in other school activities. This is an essential part of his education.

DO . . . Take some time to think about how to be assertive without "taking over" or antagonizing people. Meetings about a child's school needs are not intended to be hostile confrontations; they should provide the chance for honest examination of alternatives. One way to keep it successful is to realize you *do* have an essential role to play as an equal-status member of the team—along with educators. Keep calm, listen to what the others have to say, and ask them to extend the same courtesy to you. Your points of view may be new to each other, and you may disagree, but you can learn from one another. If everyone is truly concerned about giving a child the chance he needs to grow and learn, it should be possible to iron out disagreements through persuasion and mutual understanding.

DO . . . Make sure that your child is not excluded from participating in a regular school program because of architectural barriers. This is against the law. Section 504 states very clearly that school facilities must be made accessible and that special adaptations must be made so that services are really available to all students.

STUDY THE FINAL IEP BEFORE GIVING YOUR CONSENT—AND INSIST ON ESSENTIAL SERVICES

DO . . . Have a very complete understanding of the IEP that is produced. A copy of the final IEP should be given to you in writing. Make sure that the education goals that are agreed on are specific and that they accurately reflect decisions that were made at the meeting.

An IEP should *not* contain general goals, like: "Maximize child's potential," but should include clear-cut objectives that can be measured. One objective, for instance, could be: to be able to identify a specific number of words by sight within a certain period of time. Long term goals such as reading at a first grade level should be included, too—so you know where you're going.

An IEP should also say how much time a child is to spend in the mainstream, either in regular classes or extra-curricular activities. Services to be given should be clearly defined. For instance, if speech therapy is in the IEP, how often will it take place? What kinds of

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activities will it include? When will it start? How long will it go on? How will progress be charted? If other supportive services, such as transportation or hearing aids are needed, this should be in writing, too.

Check the whole thing carefully—with people who can advise you. The better you know and understand the IEP, the better you will be able to follow your child's progress, monitor the program to see if it is effective, and ask for changes or modifications when necessary.

DO . . . Make sure that appropriate vocational education is in your son or daughter's IEP. This has been a terribly neglected area; insist that work-skill training, on-the-job experience and other skills related to independent living are built into the school program provided for your teenager—as needed. There may not even be a vocational education program for handicapped students in your school system. (You may have to work hard with administrators and teachers to get one started. But speaking up about the need, making sure it's in the IEP, is a first step.)

DO . . . Be firm about things you consider important. Although you don't want to be so rigid that no possible plan could ever get off the ground, you are the main protector of your child's interests. If the proposed program segregates your child in a separate classroom all day, and you are convinced that he should have the chance to make it in a regular school activity (at least part of the day), stick to your guns. If a specific classroom or school has been recommended, visit it—to see if it really meets your child's needs. Art, music, school plays, gym, shop are part of the school day for other kids. Your handicapped child should be included. This will require modifications in the way programs are offered—but it can be done!

Due process comes in here. Parents must give their consent to placement of their child. If you feel that an essential part of the program is omitted, is harmful to your child, or is truly inappropriate, you should make your objections known. If the school system is not able to provide the kind of educational program your child must have, it is responsible, by law, for financing an appropriate education in a private facility. This can be a difficult bone of contention, and requires detailed evidence. In all controversies, you must put together documents, reports, letters and other statements (from teachers, doctors, and other specialists who know your child) to support your view. If possible, meet with the school members of the IEP team again to present your side. If you reach a dead end and are unable to convince school officials to change the program or placement, then ask for a due process hearing at this point. While controversial issues are being decided, children must be permitted to remain in their present school setting.

FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S PROGRAM AND MAKE SURE IT'S WORKING.

DO . . . Get to know the teacher, once your child is

placed. Ask when he or she would like to meet with you. Regular conferences are important—to find out how your child is doing, to bring up questions you have, to discuss any possible new efforts at school or at home. A good, trusting relationship between you and the teacher can catch a lot of problems before they get too big to manage.

DO . . . Help teachers and other people in school learn more about handicaps. You can help overcome feelings of fear and pity that come from lack of experience. Share books and articles. If possible, arrange for your child's teacher to visit with your son or daughter before school starts (or after school some day) so he or she has a chance to get a feeling for your child's personal qualities. (The extra boost to their relationship will help them both survive later problems—if they arise.) Offer to talk to other parents in the class—so they in turn can help their children accept and understand differences . . . and make friends. You want your child to become independent—but it won't help him to have to deal with unnecessary fear or aggression based on ignorance.

DO . . . Make sure that a formal evaluation of your child's program takes place every year . . . at the very least. If you stay in close touch with the classroom teacher (and other specialists who work with your child), you'll be able to know if changes should take place sooner—and will certainly be able to play a more meaningful part in planning next steps. Making sure that a program continues to be appropriate requires vigilant checking and rechecking . . . to see if school placement is actually encouraging a child's growth.

DO . . . Listen to your child, respect what he's saying. You need to know his reaction to schoolwork, to teachers, to classmates. He may need help getting "toughened up" in the real school world. If you are worried about how things are going . . . again, talk to the teacher, or the school counselor or principal, for advice and suggestions. Keep all your lines of communication open.

BUT PLEASE . . .

DON'T . . . let other people plan for you. If, for instance, you have reason to think that school people met "behind the scenes" to agree on the IEP, effectively keeping you out of the act, you have grounds to complain loudly. Some school administrators have had nothing but difficult experiences with parents and they freeze at the thought of working with them. (It works the other way around, too. You may have had so many frustrating or intimidating experiences that you don't want to try again. Please do.) You and the school can work together. Don't let the potential for a new creative process die by default.

DON'T . . . settle for poor or inadequate services. If you find that your child's problems are ignored, that special resource teachers or educational materials don't exist, that your child is deprived of assistance he

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Do's and Don'ts (continued)

needs to adjust to a mainstreamed classroom in which he has been placed . . . take action. Demand changes in keeping with the promise of an appropriate program.

Due process comes in here. If your efforts to work with your child's teacher, principal or school administrators fail, you have a right to request a due process hearing at this point in order to protest your child's placement.

DON'T . . . let yourself feel put down at the meetings held to discuss, plan or evaluate your child's program. It may sound scary at first, but it really doesn't have to be. When professionals use language you don't understand, feel free to ask for explanations. Remember that you are all there for the same purpose: to work out what's best for your child . . . to pinpoint his needs and to make decisions on what resources, services and special programs he needs in order to learn. You can make a valuable contribution by raising questions when ideas and recommendations don't seem to make sense.

DON'T . . . forget that, no matter how important every educational service provided to your child may be, he is a young, responsive, growing individual, with human needs to laugh, play, make friends—not a composite

of diagnosed needs. The brightness of social success means as much as academic progress (sometimes, it can mean even more). This side of life can be overlooked in conscientious efforts to improve learning skills. Your handicapped child is a person—and the purpose of all these efforts is to help him use his own strengths to become the most fulfilled person he can be. That's why it's so important to give each kid as much chance as possible to join the mainstream and to be part of the fun activities of school.

DON'T . . . try to do this all alone. Join with other parents in an organization for handicapped individuals, or the PTA, to learn all you can about new federal and state laws, the way your own school system works, how to stick up for your rights. There's so much to do! You're not the only one who needs help. Find your allies—and work together. If teaching programs for handicapped children are below standard, and none of your efforts to bring about improvement have worked, you will be far more effective if you become part of an organized group. You can add strength to a broader effort to implement and strengthen existing laws, to push for increased funding by state legislatures, to awaken the rest of the community to the rights of handicapped children.

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Barbara Scheiber, Editor & Associate Director
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Organizing Your Thoughts*

It's never too late to start keeping records. "A notebook can help organize thoughts, keep everything in one place, and serve as a reminder of what has been done for the child."

These questions may help you organize your thoughts:

1. Do I have any records from my child's doctor that will give additional information?
2. Have I listed any home observations that either reinforce or disprove the possibility of a handicap?
3. Have I recorded observations, past and present, from school?
4. Are test scores, past and present, recorded?
5. What questions have I forgotten to ask at previous meetings or discussions?
6. Is there any material, upon review, that I still don't understand?*
7. What skills do I believe are necessary for my child to learn at this time?
8. Do I see problem behaviors at home that could be helped by work at school?
9. What behaviors do I feel my child needs most to improve on?
10. What do I believe to be my child's strengths and weaknesses?
11. What have been the most effective methods of rewarding and punishing my child?
12. To what extent does my child interact with other children in the neighborhood?
13. How do I feel about programs that provide opportunities for my child to attend classes or activities with nonhandicapped youngsters?
14. What have I been doing at home to improve specific skills?
15. How much time can I reasonably spare to work with my child at home?
16. How often do I want to be informed about progress?
17. How do I prefer to get information from the school (note, telephone call, conference, home visit, etc.)?

*Quotation and questions 1-6 are taken from: Winslow, L. Parent participation. In S. Torres (Ed.), *A primer on individualized education programs for handicapped children*. Reston, Va.: The Foundation for Exceptional Children, 1977. Pp. 44, 46.

Recommended Readings

A Primer on Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children, Edited by Scottie Torres. A source of basic information about the IEP, including a chapter on parent participation, written by a parent of a handicapped child. 1977. Order from The Foundation for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091. Price \$4.95 (payment must accompany order).

Early Childhood Education for Exceptional Children, A Handbook of Ideas and Exemplary Practices, Edited by June B. Jordan, Alice H. Hayden, Merle B. Karnes, and Mary M. Wood. Sections on Record Keeping and Parent Involvement may be especially useful to parents. The Council for Exceptional Children, 1977, Stock No. 148, \$10.00.

Getting Schools Involved with Parents, Roger L. Kroth and Geraldine T. Scholl. Focuses on the merits of parent participation in the schools. Good as a reminder to both parents and educators of how people can work together to accomplish better education for children. The Council for Exceptional Children, 1978, Stock No. 172, \$5.00.

Periscope: Views of the Individualized Education Program. Based on Selected Papers from Albuquerque IEP Conference. Bluma B. Weiner, Editor. Perspectives on communication and group process of the IEP Conference. Includes several papers that deal exclusively with parent involvement. A section about IEPs for specific types of disabled children is also included. 1978, Stock No. 175, \$9.75.

Progress by Partners in Step (Special Issue of *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Spring 1978). This issue is devoted to practical information about how parents, teachers and other educators can work together to provide better educational experiences for handicapped children. 1978, Stock No. 169, \$3.50.

Workshop Evaluation Form

Date _____

	Very well	Adequately	Not well
1. I understand the purpose of an IEP.	_____	_____	_____
2. I know who is supposed to attend IEP meetings and the role of each person.	_____	_____	_____
3. I know what is supposed to be included in the written IEP.	_____	_____	_____
4. I understand how annual goals are set.	_____	_____	_____
5. I am familiar with the many placement options.	_____	_____	_____
6. I know the purpose of educational services.	_____	_____	_____
7. I know what is expected of me at the IEP conference.	_____	_____	_____
8. I feel I will be able to express my opinions at the IEP conference.	_____	_____	_____
9. I know what steps I can take if I don't agree with the IEP.	_____	_____	_____

Request for Specific Information Form

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

- ☐ I would like to have more information about the following exceptionality:

- ☐ I would like to talk to other parents of children with a similar disability.
- ☐ I would like to see how different kinds of programs operate (for example, regular class placement, resource room, and self contained class).
- ☐ I would like to know who to contact for help with the following specific concern:

- ☐ I would like to know where I could buy or order materials or equipment for

- ☐ I would like to know exactly what to do if I don't agree with the evaluation results.
- ☐ I would like to know where to get advice about placement and instructional decisions.
- ☐ Other requests:

Other Training Materials and Publications
available from
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091



For an overview of special education

Exceptional Times: An Historical Perspective of Special Education.

Jean Nazzaro. 16 mm color film, approximately 15 minutes. Reflects the changes that have occurred in advocacy, technology, legislation, and teaching in the 1900's. 1977, No. 157A, \$150.00.

For an overview of Public Law 94-142

P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

J. Ballard, J. Nazzaro and F. Weintraub. 3 film strips and tape cassettes: Introducing P.L. 94-142; Complying with P.L. 94-142; and P.L. 94-142 Works for Children. Scripts, a copy of the law, and a question and answer document are included. 1976, No. 136, \$50.00.

For a training session on due process

Procedural Safeguards P.L. 94-142 - A Guide for Schools and Parents.

3 film strips and cassettes: The Identification, Evaluation and Placement Process, How the Law Works: Three Case Studies; and How a Procedural Safeguard Hearing Works. Also included is a discussion guide booklet, and ditto masters summarizing various aspects of the law. 1978, No. 167, \$90.00.

For additional information on procedural safeguards

A Primer on Due Process--Education Decisions for Handicapped Children.

A. Abeson, N. Bolick, and J. Hass. Details the rights of children and parents, including access to records, participation in placement decisions, information about hearings, and a section on surrogate parents. 1975, No. 104, \$4.95.

For a workshop on bias in testing

How Can Tests Be Unfair? A Workshop on Nondiscriminatory Testing.

Jean Nazzaro. Six simulation activities demonstrating different types of test biases. 1975, No. 102, \$35.00.

For a demonstration of problems in placement

Special Education Placement: Issues and Alternatives--A Decision Making Module.

J. Cawley, W. Korba, and A.J. Pappanikou. 16 mm b/w film. Depicts a situation in which school personnel are in conflict with a parent about a child's placement. A companion publication presents 35 teaching units based on the film and on other activities. 1976, No. 121 (includes film and text) \$125.00. Additional copies of text No. 121a, \$5.00.

For experiencing a variety of handicapping conditions

Everybody Counts! A Workshop Manual to Increase Awareness of Handicapped

People. M.J. Ward, R.N. Arkell, H.G. Dahl, and J.H. Wise. Provides directions, materials, and discussion guide for 25 simulation activities that allow participants to feel what it is like to be disabled. 1979, No. 189, \$20.00.

Note: Orders totaling \$25.00 or less must be prepaid.

foundation
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1920 association drive
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(703)620-3660

Products about Individualized Education Programs
available from
The Foundation for Exceptional Children

Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children (Sound Filmstrips)

FILMSTRIP #1: Fulfilling the Promise. Presents a basic explanation of the components of PL 94-142 that relate to the development of the IEP. Shows how the IEP serves as a management tool linking children to required services.

FILMSTRIP #2: The First Steps. Shows how the assessment process works and discusses how schools can combine assessment information to report the child's present level of performance. Presents the rationale for written annual goals and how to set priorities necessary to decide the appropriate annual goals that lead to writing short term objectives.

FILMSTRIP #3: From Conference Room to Classroom. Highlights IEP issues including monitoring pupil progress, administrative procedures, personnel issues, and organizational patterns.

A Primer on Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children edited by Scottie Torres Higgins is also included in the media package. This 60 page booklet deals with the development and evaluation of the IEP, parent participation, administrative process, instructional plans, policy, and sample IEP form.

Sound/filmstrip package - \$65.00

Separate copies of the Primer on Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children - \$4.95.

(Orders totaling \$50.00 or less must be prepaid)

Acknowledgement

The IEP forms used in Preparing for the IEP Meeting were adapted from A Primer on Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children, Scottie Torres Higgins, Editor, FEC, 1977 and the Special Education Administrative Policies Manual, Scottie Torres Higgins, CEC, 1977.